

FAQ: Eligibility to Instruct Courses Meeting Wisconsin CCW Requirements

This document summarizes key aspects regarding who can instruct classes that satisfy Wisconsin's training requirements for a concealed carry license. Every effort has been made to be as accurate as possible. However, this document does not constitute either an informal or formal opinion of the Wisconsin Attorney General or the Wisconsin Department of Justice as described in Wis. Stat. § 165.015(1). It does not constitute legal advice or counsel. It does not create an attorney-client relationship. It creates no rights beyond those established under the constitutions, statutes, regulations and administrative rules of the United States and the State of Wisconsin. It does not attempt to provide answers to every question that may arise regarding the instruction or carrying of concealed weapons. Many factors may affect a person's decision whether to instruct courses or apply for a license to carry concealed weapons in Wisconsin. You should review the statutes and administrative code governing CCW and consult a private attorney for specific information and advice when necessary and appropriate.

This document reflects the law as of the date of its publication. It may be superseded or affected by other versions or changes in the law.

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Instructor Certification & Qualifications

How do I become a certified instructor?

You must be currently certified as a firearm instructor by a “national or state organization that certifies firearm instructors.” “National or state organization that certifies firearms instructors” means any association, partnership, corporation, or limited liability company that is registered, certified, or has an appointed agent on file with the department of financial institutions or has equivalent legal recognition in another state; that customarily or regularly provides training and certification for firearms instructors; and that requires its certified instructors to demonstrate the ability and knowledge required to teach a firearms safety or training course, as defined in sub. (7).¹

Examples of these organizations include the National Rifle Association, the National Association of Certified Firearm Instructors, the Utah Dept. of Public Safety Bureau of Criminal Identification, the Minnesota Dept. of Public Safety Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and others.

Note that you must be certified as a firearm instructor. Organizations may offer multiple instructor certifications, but only firearm instructor certifications (such as “pistol”, “rifle”, or “shotgun”) are eligible to teach CCW courses.

Are DNR Hunter Safety instructors eligible to teach CCW courses?

No. DNR Hunter Safety instructors teach Hunter Safety courses following DNR procedures. Hunter Safety instructors are not able to teach courses independent of the DNR Hunter Safety course. Hunter Safety instructors who wish to teach CCW courses must obtain firearm instructor certification from a “national or state organization that certifies firearm instructors.”

Are DSPS Firearm Proficiency Certifiers eligible to teach CCW courses?

No. The DSPS is not an “association, partnership, corporation, or limited liability company” under JUS 17.03(12). Furthermore, Firearm Proficiency Certifiers (FPC) obtain their FPC status by presenting proof of actual firearm instructor status from a root certifying organization. However, FPC status may not terminate when their “actual” instructor status expires.² Thus, FPC status may not reflect the FPC’s actual status as a “firearm instructor,” as defined.

¹ JUS 17.03(12)

² <http://dps.wi.gov/Documents/Credentialing%20Forms/Business%20Application%20Forms/fm1912.pdf>
(downloaded 1/29/2015)

How do I become a DOJ-certified Firearm Safety Course Instructor?

DOJ certification is limited to Handgun instructors certified by the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB). To become LESB-certified you must be employed as a Wisconsin law enforcement officer and take additional instructor courses.

Please note that DOJ instructor certification is not required to teach CCW courses. Certification by any eligible “national or state organization that certifies firearm instructors” is all that is required to teach a course satisfying Wisconsin CCW training requirements.

Does the DOJ maintain a list of “approved” instructors?

No. Instructors are not required to register with the DOJ or to seek DOJ approval before conducting classes. The DOJ evaluates whether training met requirements—including necessary instructor credentials—based on the student certificate supplied by the CCW applicant. Thus, instructors will want to ensure their certificates meet all Wisconsin requirements to prevent student applications being returned as insufficient. See the “Certificate Requirements” section of this FAQ.

Instructors may choose to sign up for an email notification list to receive occasional updates from the DOJ, here: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/conceal-carry/training-requirements>. All DOJ-certified instructors automatically receive these updates—no action is required.

Course Content and Curriculum

What qualifies as a “Firearms Safety or Training Course”?

“Firearms safety or training course” means a course of instructor-led training that provides a certificate or affidavit of successful completion that includes the items specified in JUS 17.05(2)(a) and that, at a minimum, instructs on, and practices the student's comprehension of, firearm safety rules; safe firearm and ammunition use, handling, transport, and storage; legally permissible possession, transportation, and use of firearms, including use of deadly force; and techniques for avoiding and controlling violent confrontations.³

Is live fire or actual handling of weapons required?

Live fire is not required. The DOJ model curriculum includes handling and unloading handguns, and is the required curriculum for DOJ-certified instructors. Instructors certified by other organizations must meet the requirements of JUS 17.05(2)(a), including instruction on, and practice of the student's comprehension of, “firearm safety rules; safe firearm and ammunition use, handling, transport, and storage; legally permissible possession, transportation, and use of firearms, including use of deadly force; and techniques for avoiding and controlling violent confrontations.”

Is there a required curriculum?

No, but the course must instruct, at a minimum, the course content specified in JUS 17.03(7): “...at a minimum, instructs on, and practices the student's comprehension of, firearm safety rules; safe firearm and ammunition use, handling, transport, and storage; legally permissible possession, transportation, and use of firearms, including use of deadly force; and techniques for avoiding and controlling violent confrontations.” The DOJ's model curriculum satisfies all of these requirements.

Can I use the DOJ model curriculum?

The DOJ course is the required curriculum for DOJ instructors. It is freely available for use by other certified instructors. Those instructors, however, are not permitted to represent themselves or the course as certified by the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

The DOJ course materials are copyrighted. However, the DOJ grants permission for these materials to be reproduced when reproduced in their original format and in their entirety.

The DOJ curriculum includes a Student Manual, Instructor Guide, PowerPoint presentation, and related handouts and training materials. It is available for download here:

<https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/conceal-carry/training-requirements>

³ JUS 17.03(7)

Do online courses satisfy Wisconsin's training requirement?

No. All concealed carry courses must be “instructor led.” “Instructor led” means training that is conducted face-to-face individually or in groups where instructor(s) actively guide students through each lesson, answer questions, facilitate discussion, and provide feedback on activities and assignments. Learner-led or self-directed learning — the delivery of learning experiences to independent learners who lead and manage their own experience, delivered via web pages, multimedia presentations, computer applications, online presentations, or similar methods — is not instructor-led.⁴

Thus, the portion of any class that is delivered online cannot be accepted towards satisfaction of Wisconsin's CCW training requirement. If a class is delivered partially online and partially face-to-face, only the face-to-face portion of the course can apply towards satisfaction of Wisconsin's CCW training requirement.

Is there a maximum instructor-student ratio?

No, the previous limit of 50 students per instructor has been removed.

Is there a minimum hour requirement?

No.

Can DOJ instructors add material to the DOJ curriculum?

Yes. The DOJ does not prohibit DOJ-certified instructors from adding additional time and content outside the “core” course. For example, a DOJ instructor could teach an eight-hour class consisting of the four-hour Firearm Safety Course and four hours of handgun operation. Any added content is the sole responsibility of the instructor and will take additional time—added curriculum cannot replace existing mandatory curriculum.

How can I obtain the written examination?

The DOJ Instructor Guide refers to a required written exam. Access to this exam is limited to DOJ-certified instructors, who must administer the exam to their students. The exam is available to DOJ-certified instructors via WILENET.

Other certified instructors may create their own exam. For comparison purposes, the DOJ exam consists of 25 multiple choice questions, with 80% required to pass. The exam is straightforward, and there are no “trick” questions. As an example, this is question #3:

3. How long is a concealed carry license valid?
 - A. 1 year.
 - B. 5 years.
 - C. Lifetime.

⁴ JUS 17.03(8)

Course Certificates

What must be on the certificate I give to my students?

At a minimum, the certificate must include the following:⁵

- The applicant's name.
- The name of the firearms safety or training course.
- The date on which the applicant completed the firearms safety or training course.
- The name of the instructor who taught the firearms safety or training course to the applicant and the name of the agency or organization that certified the instructor.

A model certificate illustrating minimum requirements is available on the DOJ's CCW website.

In addition, the student must provide information that the course met all training requirements. Although students could submit a signed statement affirming this, as a practical matter most instructors want to assist students by issuing a certificate that documents the training course met all requirements. Therefore, the certificate should contain evidence sufficient to establish that the course completed by the applicant was a firearms safety and training course as defined in JUS 17.03(7). Sufficient evidence shall include one of the following:

- A signed statement by the instructor who taught the firearms safety or training course to the applicant affirming that the course completed by the applicant was a firearms safety and training course as defined in JUS 17.03(7).
- Information on the certificate or affidavit described in sub. (2)(a) sufficient to establish that the course completed by the applicant was a firearms safety and training course as defined in JUS 17.03(7).

What happens if my certificate is insufficient?

Certificates that do not meet minimum requirements will not be accepted as proof of training. If a student sends in insufficient proof of training, the application will be returned unprocessed.

What student certificate must DOJ instructors use?

DOJ instructors must use the certificate available to them in the secure section of WILENET, here: <https://wilenet.org/secure/html/resources/squadroom/ccw/curriculum.html>.

⁵ JUS 17.05(2)

What is the “Responsible Organization” for DOJ instructor courses?

When completing the student certificate, DOJ instructors must specify the “responsible organization” and provide complete contact information for that organization.

- If the instructor is teaching on their own, the instructor is the responsible organization and must list their own mailing address and phone number.
- If the instructor is teaching on behalf of a company (including a personal LLC), then that company is the responsible organization.
- If the instructor is teaching the CCW course as an employee of their law enforcement agency or technical college, then the agency or college is the responsible organization.

Additional Information

Where can I read the Administrative Code?

The DOJ uses Administrative Code to establish rules to provide consistent and fair guidance to the public and the agency. You can view the administrative code here:

http://docs.legis.wi.gov/code/admin_code/jus/17/

Where can I download the DOJ model curriculum?

<https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/conceal-carry/training-requirements>

Can students apply for, or renew, their CCW license online?

Yes. Students may mail paper forms, or may apply for, and renew, their CCW licenses online.

- Online address: <https://concealedcarry.doj.wi.gov>.
- Paper forms: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/cib/conceal-carry/ccw-paper-forms>.